



Maura Healey, Governor
Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor
Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary & CEO
Phillip Eng, General Manager & CEO



February 18, 2025

Boston Planning Department
City of Boston
One City Hall Plaza
Boston, MA 02201

Attention: Camille Platt, Project Manager, Boston Planning Department

RE: West End Library PNF
151 Cambridge St., Boston MA 02114

Dear Camille:

The MBTA offers the following response relative to the West End Library Project Notification Form (PNF) dated January 8, 2025. The West End Library PNF envisions the redevelopment of the library into a new and expanded space as well as 119 affordable residences. The MBTA has reviewed the West End Library project due to the proximity to the Blue Line, has concerns related to operations, safety, structural considerations, and construction activity. This letter includes comments made by the MBTA's Real Estate and Transit-Oriented Development teams. The MBTA appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on this project and we look forward to collaborating with the city and project team to mitigate construction impacts and increase ridership in supporting the successful implementation of transit-oriented development.

MBTA Comments

Licensing Requirement

Due to the proximity to the Blue Line tunnel and infrastructure, the Authority's Zone of Influence policy applies and requires review of activities and project areas during construction. This may include review of design and construction plans by internal departments on potential impacts, coordination of project activities with the project team(s), and assignment of MBTA field support during construction, when deemed necessary by MBTA, to maintain a safe work site and MBTA operations. License applications and further information on the MBTA's policy may be obtained at mbtarealty.com/licenses. All staffing costs will be borne by the project through the execution of a force account agreement.

MBTA Operations and Safety

Due to the project's proximity to the Blue Line infrastructure, it is recommended that the project consider MBTA Engineering Design Standards and Plans, specifically:

- ❖ MBTA Design Standards and Guidelines
- ❖ American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association (AREMA) Standards

Of particular concern is the impact of vibration on the Blue Line tunnel structure beneath Cambridge Street. Section 6.9 (Geotechnical Impacts) of the PNF filing states that "Geotechnical instrumentation will

be installed and monitored during the work to observe the performance of the lateral earth support system and adjacent buildings and structures." Given MBTA Right-of-Way (ROW) proximity, the Proponent will be requested to monitor vibration to the track and tunnel structure using a methodology approved by the MBTA and comply with the license terms and conditions.

Extents of the Bowdoin Loop



Adjacency of project parcel (red outline) and existing MBTA Blue Line tunnel structure (cyan)

Crane, Hoists & Aerial Lift Use

The project may require the support of a crane, hoists and/or aerial lifts, and placement of the equipment to prevent loading of the tunnel structure and related concerns to MBTA's subsurface infrastructure will be a requirement. The project will need to plan around these concerns accordingly, and so the MBTA will need to review and accept work plans for cranes, hoists, and aerial lifts that have the potential to impact MBTA infrastructure in advance of construction.

Moving Forward

Prior to any Boston Planning Department Board action on this project in the future, the MBTA kindly requests that the project team schedule a follow up meeting to discuss the items outlined here in more detail as necessary.

Continued partnership with the City of Boston is a key component in identifying opportunities to support a safe transit system that can serve the West End area as it continues to develop. If you have any questions regarding these issues, please feel free to contact Joe Blankenship, Director of TOD Planning at (857) 378-6648 or by email at jblankenship@mbta.com.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Mecca, Deputy Chief, Transit-Oriented Development

cc: J. Blankenship, Director of Transit-Oriented Development Planning
M. Folts, Senior Manager of Transit-Oriented Development Planning
R. Mann, Senior Director of Real Estate
R. Duverge, Deputy Director of Real Estate Permitting & Planning
C. Hines, Senior Deputy Director of Development Review, Boston Planning Department
N. Monani, Senior Deputy Director of Development Review, Boston Planning Department
J. Fitzgerald, Deputy Director of Transportation Planning, Boston Planning Department

Boston Water and Sewer Commission

980 Harrison Avenue
Boston, MA 02119
617-989-7000



February 6, 2025

Camille Platt
Boston Planning Department
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Re: 151 Cambridge St, West End Library Redevelopment PNF

Dear Camille Platt,

The Boston Water and Sewer Commission (Commission) has reviewed the Project Notification Form (PNF) for 151 Cambridge Street, West End Library Redevelopment (the project). The project will be a new mixed-use building of approximately 176,520 square feet (sf), encompassed by a new two-story West End library and 119 residential units across 12 additional stories.

The Commission owns and maintains the water, sewer and drain lines serving the project site. The project site is supplied with water for domestic and fire protection from Cambridge Street by a 12-inch southern high pit cast iron (PCI) water main installed in 1903 and a 12-inch southern low cast iron (CI) main installed in 1925.

The project is served by a 12-inch and 18-inch storm drainage systems, a 10-inch and 12-inch sanitary sewer system and two combined sewer systems 10-inch and a 24x28-inch, all these systems are on Cambridge Street.

The Commission comments regarding the project are provide below:

General

1. The proponents Preservation of Affordable Housing and Caste Capital (Preservation of Affordable Housing) must submit a site plan and General Service Application (GSA) to the Commission for the proposed project. Prior to the initial phase of the site plan development, the proponent should meet the Commission's Design and Engineering Customer Services to review water main, sewer and storm drainage system availability and potential upgrades that could impact the project's development.
2. Prior to demolition of any buildings, all water, sewer, and storm drain connections to the buildings must be cut and capped at the main pipe in accordance with the Commission's requirements. Preservation of Affordable Housing must then complete a Termination



Verification Approval Form for a Demolition Permit, available from the Commission and submit the completed form to the City of Boston's Inspectional Services Department before a demolition permit will be issued.

3. All new or relocated water mains, sewers and storm drains must be designed and constructed at Preservation of Affordable Housing expense. They must be designed and constructed in conformance with the Commission's design standards, Water Distribution System and Sewer Use Regulations, and Requirements for Site Plans. To assure compliance with the Commission's requirements, Preservation of Affordable Housing must submit a site plan and a General Service Application to the Commission's Engineering Customer Service Department for review and approval when the design of the new water and wastewater systems and the proposed service connections to those systems are 50 percent complete. The site plan should include the locations of new, relocated and existing water mains, sewers and drains which serve the site, proposed service connections as well as water meter locations.
4. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), in cooperation with the MWRA and its member communities, are implementing a coordinated approach to flow control in the MWRA regional wastewater system, particularly the removal of extraneous clean water (e.g., infiltration/inflow (I/I)) in the system. In this regard, DEP has been routinely requiring proponents proposing to add significant new wastewater flow to assist in the I/I reduction effort to ensure that the additional wastewater flows are offset by the removal of I/I. Currently, DEP is typically using a minimum 4:1 ratio for I/I removal to new wastewater flow added. The Commission supports the DEP/MWRA policy and will require Preservation of Affordable Housing to develop a consistent inflow reduction plan. The 4:1 reduction should be addressed at least 90 days prior to activation of water service and will be based on the estimated sewage generation provided with the Project site plan.
5. The water usage and sewage generation estimates were not provided. The Commission requires that these values be calculated and submitted with the Site Plan. Preservation of Affordable Housing should provide separate estimates of peak and continuous maximum water demand for residential, irrigation and air-conditioning make-up water for the project. Estimates should be based on full-site build-out of the proposed project. Preservation of Affordable Housing should also provide the methodology used to estimate water demand for the proposed project.
6. Preservation of Affordable Housing should be aware that the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a draft Remediation General Permit (RGP) for Groundwater Remediation, Contaminated Construction Dewatering, and Miscellaneous Surface Water Discharges. If groundwater contaminated with petroleum products, for example, is



encountered, Preservation of Affordable Housing will be required to apply for a RGP to cover these discharges.

Water

1. Preservation of Affordable Housing should provide separate estimates of peak and continuous maximum water demand for residential, commercial, industrial, irrigation of landscaped areas, and air-conditioning make-up water for the project with the site plan. Estimates should be based on full-site build-out of the proposed project. Preservation of Affordable Housing should also provide the methodology used to estimate water demand for the proposed project.
2. In addition to the water conservation measures required by the Massachusetts Plumbing Code and listed in the PNF, Preservation of Affordable Housing should also consider implementing other water saving measures where appropriate. Public restrooms should be equipped with sensor-operated faucets and toilets.
3. Preservation of Affordable Housing is required to obtain a Hydrant Permit for use of any hydrant during the construction phase of this project. The water used from the hydrant must be metered. Preservation of Affordable Housing should contact the Commission's Operations Division for information on how to obtain a Hydrant Permit.
4. If potable water is to be used for irrigation of the landscaped areas, the amount should be quantified. If Preservation of Affordable Housing plans to install a sprinkler system, the Commission suggests that timers, tension meters (soil moisture indicators) and rainfall sensors also be installed. The Commission strongly encourages the creation of landscape that requires minimal use of potable water.
5. The Commission is utilizing a Fixed Radio Meter Reading System to obtain water meter readings. For new water meters, the Commission will provide a Meter Transmitter Unit (MTU) and connect the device to the meter. For information regarding the installation of MTUs, the Proponents should contact the Commission's Meter installation Department.

Sewage/Drainage

1. A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Nutrients has been established for the Lower Charles River Watershed by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. In order to achieve the reductions in phosphorus loadings required by the TMDL, phosphorus concentrations in stormwater discharges to the lower Charles River from Boston must be reduced by 64%. To accomplish the necessary reductions in phosphorus, the Commission is requiring developers of projects in the lower Charles River watershed to infiltrate all



stormwater discharging from impervious areas. Preservation of Affordable Housing will be required to submit with the site plan a phosphorus reduction plan for the proposed development.

2. Preservation of Affordable Housing must submit to the Commission's Engineering Customer Service Department a detailed stormwater management plan which:
 - Identifies best management practices for controlling erosion and for preventing the discharge of sediment and contaminated groundwater or stormwater runoff to the Commission's drainage system when the construction is underway.
 - Includes a site map which shows, at a minimum, existing drainage patterns and areas used for storage or treatment of contaminated soils, groundwater or stormwater, and the location of major control or treatment structures to be utilized during the construction.
 - Provides a stormwater management plan in compliance with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection standards mentioned above. The plan should include a description of the measures to control pollutants in stormwater after construction is completed.
3. The Commission encourages Preservation of Affordable Housing to explore additional opportunities for protecting stormwater quality on site by minimizing sanding and the use of deicing chemicals, pesticides, and fertilizers.
4. If Preservation of Affordable Housing seeks to discharge dewatering drainage to the Commission's sewer system, they will be required to obtain a Drainage Discharge Permit from the Commission's Engineering Customer Service Department prior to discharge.
5. Preservation of Affordable Housing must fully investigate methods for retaining stormwater on-site before the Commission will consider a request to discharge stormwater to the Commission's system. The site plan should indicate how storm drainage from roof drains will be handled and the feasibility of retaining their stormwater discharge on-site. Under no circumstances will stormwater be allowed to discharge to a sanitary sewer.
6. Sanitary sewage must be kept separate from stormwater and separate sanitary sewer and storm drain service connections must be provided.
7. The Commission requests that the proponent install a permanent casting stating "Don't Dump: Drains to Charles River" next to any catch basin created or modified as part of this project. Preservation of Affordable Housing should contact the Commission's Operations Division for information regarding the purchase of the castings.



8. pThe Commission requires that existing stormwater and sanitary sewer service connections, which are to be re-used by the proposed project, be dye tested to confirm they are connected to the appropriate system.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Project.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John P. Sullivan".

John P. Sullivan, P.E.
Chief Engineer

JPS/kr

Cc: Preservation of Affordable Housing via mail
C. Rizzi, Mass. Water Resources Authority via email
L. Melara, BWSC via email
S. McFee, BWSC via email



CITY of BOSTON

Michelle Wu, Mayor

The developer is encouraged to contact the City's Disabilities Commission to confirm compliant accessibility within the Public ROW.

Green Infrastructure:

The developer shall work with PWD, the Green Infrastructure Division, and the Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC) to determine appropriate methods of green infrastructure and stormwater management systems within the Public ROW. The ongoing maintenance of such systems shall require an LM&I Agreement with the PIC.

Driveway Curb Cuts

Any proposed driveway curb cuts within the Public ROW will need to be reviewed and approved by the PIC. All existing curb cuts that will no longer be utilized shall be closed.

Discontinuances

Any discontinuances (sub-surface, surface or above surface) within the Public ROW must be processed through the PIC.

Easements

Any easements within the Public ROW associated with this project must be processed through the PIC.

Landscaping

The developer must seek approval from the Chief Landscape Architect with the Parks and Recreation Department for all landscape elements within the Public ROW. The landscaping program must accompany a LM&I with the PIC.

Street Lighting

The developer must seek approval from the PWD Street Lighting Division, where needed, for all proposed street lighting to be installed by the developer. All proposed lighting within the Public ROW must be compatible with the area lighting to provide a consistent urban design. The developer should coordinate with the PWD Street Lighting Division for an assessment of any additional street lighting upgrades that are to be considered in conjunction with this project. All existing metal street light pull box covers within the limits of sidewalk construction to remain shall be replaced with new composite covers per PWD Street Lighting standards. Metal covers should remain for pull box covers in the roadway. For all sections of sidewalk that are to be reconstructed in the Public ROW that contain or are proposed to contain a City-owned street light system with underground conduit, the developer shall be responsible for installing shadow conduit adjacent to the street lighting system. Installation of shadow conduit and limits should be coordinated through the BPDA Smart Utilities team.

Roadway

Based on the extent of construction activity, including utility connections and taps, the developer will be responsible for the full restoration of the roadway sections that immediately abut the property and, in some cases, to extend the limits of roadway restoration to the nearest intersection. A plan showing the extents and methods for roadway restoration shall be submitted to the PWD Engineering Division for review and approval.

Additional Project Coordination

All projects must be entered into the City of Boston Utility Coordination Software (COBUCS) to review for any conflicts with other proposed projects within the Public ROW. The developer must coordinate with any existing projects within the same limits and receive clearance from PWD before commencing work.



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Boston City Hall • 1 City Hall Sq Rm 714 • Boston MA 02201-2024
The Office of the Streets, Transportation, and Sanitation
(617) 635-4900



CITY of BOSTON

Michelle Wu, Mayor

Resiliency:

Proposed designs should follow the Boston Public Works Climate Resilient Design Guidelines (<https://www.boston.gov/environment-and-energy/climate-resilient-design-guidelines>) where applicable.

Please note that these are the general standard and somewhat specific PWD requirements. More detailed comments may follow and will be addressed during the PIC review process. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at jeffrey.alexis@boston.gov or at 617-635-4966.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Alexis

Principal Civil Engineer
Boston Public Works Department
Engineering Division



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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The Office of the Streets, Transportation, and Sanitation
(617) 635-4900



March 14, 2025

Ms. Camille Platt
Boston Planning Department
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Project Notification Form, Solicitation for Public Comment
151 Cambridge Street — West End Library Redevelopment

Dear Ms. Platt,

Homes on Hancock is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that supports affordable housing on Beacon Hill. As board members and neighbors, we are committed to furthering our mission, to ensure that Bostonians are not priced out of this historic and beautiful neighborhood. Homes on Hancock also relies on the support of a community of more than 100 neighborhood donors and volunteers who care deeply about creating high-quality affordable housing.

We are pleased to support the proposed development at 151 Cambridge Street. Because the plans described in the Project Notification Form (PNF) filed on January 8th have been informed by a robust community dialogue, we expect the project will be a success. It is reassuring to see the Planning Department has endorsed a neighborhood consensus that new affordable housing should consist primarily of units with space and resources to support families and children. We note the recent [Boston Indicators report](#)¹ showing that 70% of unhoused individuals in greater Boston are families, compared to only 28% nationwide.

Although the comment period is closing, we hope the community dialogue will continue. In particular, the proposed development will require zoning relief, and regardless of whether a 121A tax abatement is granted, neighbors should be given consideration in reviewing the height of the building, its contribution to the streetscape of Cambridge Street, and the distribution affordability across different unit types.

Height of building

The zoning rules for the immediate area north of Cambridge Street are set forth in [Article 47A](#)², which is informed by a [1991 BRA Cambridge Street Plan](#)³. Although this plan is over 30 years old, it is far-sighted in its scope and ambition. As neighbors and long-time residents of the North Slope of Beacon Hill and the West End, we support its goal of mending the damage wrought by Urban Renewal in the 1950s and 60s.

¹ https://www.bostonindicators.org/reports/report-detail-pages/homelessness_and_housing

² <https://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/486d49b6-16de-470b-99c8-3ee0af3799eb>

³ <https://archive.org/details/cambridgestreetp00bost>



Cambridge Street is where old meets new. To the south, the historic buildings are designed at human scale, not more than four or five storeys in height, and styled with architectural details that are anchored in tradition and history. The skyscrapers in the new West End to the north are more than 30 storeys tall, stark and modernist in form, angled and set back from the street with fences and lavish private spaces. The Cambridge Street Plan establishes reasonable criteria for bridging this gap and connecting the neighborhoods, with 65-foot limits on building heights and guidelines for setbacks and streetwalls that are meant to make the street feel cohesive and welcoming.

While we share the City's interest in achieving the greatest good by maximizing the density of new housing developments, we hope there will be room for further community discussion regarding the proposed 14-storey, 165-foot building, which is not consistent with the Cambridge Street Plan. The streetscape is changing quickly, and the choices we make now will affect the neighborhood for decades to come. Already the new Phillip and Susan Ragon Building looms over the neighborhood, and seems far taller than the architectural renderings made it appear during the public review process.

Impact on streetscape and public safety

More importantly, we urge the Proponents and the Planning Board to gather further community input on the proposed public spaces around the building. For several years, neighbors have noted persistent problems with loitering, drinking and drug use in front of the present West End Library and the partially sheltered entrance area for 161 Cambridge Street. Requirements in the present zoning code around setbacks and streetwalls are thoughtfully considered to create a welcoming environment without encouraging loitering or abetting illicit activities. We are strongly in favor of new public spaces that are safe and welcoming to all, but given the ongoing public safety issue that is exacerbated by the streetscape at 151-161 Cambridge Street, we feel community input is required to achieve a good outcome.

Equitable distribution of affordability levels

Finally, in keeping with our mission to ensure Bostonians are not priced out of Beacon Hill, we ask the proponents and the Planning Board to make the affordability of the proposed units at 161 Cambridge Street public for review and discussion. The PNF only describes the distribution of affordability (40 at 30% AMI, 49 at 60% AMI, 30 at 80% AMI) and the distribution of unit sizes (12 Studio, 29 BR, 70 2BR, 8 3BR). We strongly urge all parties to support an equitable distribution of affordability, so that units of each size are available at each income level. It would be a terrible missed opportunity if only the Studios and 1BR units were available at 30% AMI.

We are grateful for the opportunity to provide constructive input on this development. We believe in affordable housing and we support its development in our neighborhood. Please continue to involve us and other neighbors in the design and zoning process so we can all work together to achieve the best outcome for everyone.

Sincerely,



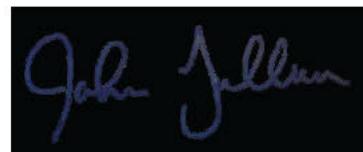
Harold Brink, President



Devin Kennedy, Treasurer



Wendy Oleksiak, Board Member



John Gulliver, Secretary



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Nathalie Salomon, Board Member

Harold Brink
John Gulliver
Devin Kennedy
Victoria Kinnealey
Christina Madek
Nathalie Salomon
Wendy Oleksiak

Cc: (via e-mail)

Preservation of Affordable Housing POAH LLC, Meena Jacob (mjacob@poah.org)



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054

JAY D. LIVINGSTONE
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
8TH SUFFOLK DISTRICT

Chair
Joint Committee on Children, Families and
Persons with Disabilities

STATE HOUSE ROOM 146
TEL. (617) 722 – 2011
Jay.Livingstone@MAHouse.gov

March 6, 2025

Teresa Polhemus
Executive Director/Secretary
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square
Boston, Massachusetts, 02201

Re: 151 Cambridge Street - West End Library Redevelopment Project

Dear Director Polhemus,

As the State Representative for the 8th Suffolk District, which includes the West End Branch of the Boston Public Library, I am writing to express my support for the proposed West End Library Redevelopment Project. I am excited about the inclusion of affordable housing and community space at this site as part of the library redevelopment. The addition of 119 affordable units will be a major benefit to the neighborhood and will help ensure a viable housing option for seniors, low-income workforce and other residents who may otherwise not find it financially sustainable to live in the area.

I am encouraged by the cooperation between Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH), Caste Capital and The City of Boston on this proposed redevelopment. POAH has a great reputation in the neighborhood for running affordable housing and I am pleased about their involvement in this project.

While the West End Library Redevelopment Project has the potential to be a great benefit for the surrounding community, many neighbors have voiced design concerns about the project's outdoor plaza and the security risk it could pose with regard to the area's unhoused population. I share the concern of community members who are worried about the plaza's design and security risks relating to the unhoused. The plaza design has been a focus at every public meeting since the start of this project's public process. Outdoor drug use and overnight sleeping have been issues the West End Branch Library has attempted to mitigate for years, which eventually resulted in the fencing off of the area in question. I am pleased that

POAH's design team has agreed to give further consideration to securing the plaza with a new concept within 90 days of the February 12, 2025 public meeting.

Affordable housing and accessible community spaces are needed resources in the West End neighborhood. This project will add to the vibrancy of this community and help bring relief to the affordability crisis that has impacted the downtown area. For these reasons, I am in support of the West End Library Redevelopment Project. Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,



Jay Livingstone
State Representative
8th Suffolk District



*Neighbors
Helping
Neighbors*

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**BY EMAIL: CAMILLE.PLATT@BOSTON.GOV
AND TERESA.POLHEMUS@BOSTON.GOV**

March 14, 2025

Teresa Polhemus
Executive Director/Secretary
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA, 02201

Camille Platte
Planning Department
City of Boston
1 City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201

Re: 151 Cambridge Street - West End Library Redevelopment Project Notification Form

Dear Ms. Polhemus and Ms. Platt:

The Beacon Hill Civic Association (BHCA) has endeavored, since 1922, to enhance and preserve the quality of life on and around Beacon Hill. We thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the Article 80 Project Notification Form (PNF) for City of Boston's West End Library Branch Redevelopment Project (the "Library"). The public process to date regarding the Library has been robust and interactive, and this was greatly appreciated by BHCA and beneficial to the project. Regrettably, the Planning Department's notice of the February 12, 2025, public meeting was far from the prior excellent communication. BHCA and several other commenters have shared this view, noting that it was wholly inadequate to initially provide only nine (9) days to comment on a project that has been in the works for years. We therefore greatly appreciate the extension of the comment period until March 14, 2025, and hope a similarly expansive spirit of communication will continue throughout the remainder of the Library project, with the developers and Planning Department inviting and hearing community input.

BHCA notes that it has been a consistent supporter of the redevelopment of the Library into a space with family-oriented affordable housing, and that a number of BHCA's former leaders have been stalwart advocates for this project for at least 20 years. building affordable housing over a library on the current site. This redevelopment has been many years in the making, and we look forward to its continued progress.

BHCA welcomes the proposed replacement of the West End Branch Library, which serves residents of Downtown, the West End, and Beacon Hill. City residents of all ages will benefit not only from a more modern, attractive, functional, and inspiring space, but also from the branch's renewed and improved ability to provide enriching programming and services. BHCA has chosen not to comment on the space allotted for the Library in the proposed design, as we understand that BPL has its own, separate specifications and criteria for evaluating the new library space.

¹ For example, the recent New York Times Bestseller, *Rough Sleepers*, about the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program, makes particular note of how drug use and crime focused on the park that was formerly on Mass General property along Cambridge Street, shown in the photo in this excerpt from the book, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2023/01/excerpt-from-tracy-kidders-rough-sleepers/>. In recent years, the owners of 165 Cambridge St fenced off the open southeast corner of the building to eliminate the negative behaviors in that space abutting the project site.

The current library's location on Cambridge Street is dark most hours of the day and has historically attracted negative uses on the front and adjoining sidewalks and hidden places within the site when the library was not open. Experience tells us that prior attempts at creating open space or seating areas along Cambridge Street have failed.¹ The open space and seating described by the proposed design, on both sides of the building, are likely to have the opposite of the intended beneficial effect, by attracting individuals who are *neither* residents of the building nor library visitors, and inviting negative behaviors that will adversely impact building residents and Library users. BHCA asks that this design element be reconsidered.

BHCA welcomes the positive presence and activation the new library building will bring to the area, with design elements aimed at elevating the aesthetics of the space, while reducing the negative activity in the area. These goals are more important than inclusion of a token "public space" or seating at grade level. We have made this same comment previously, as we have observed the experience of the Friends of the Public Garden last year, which was forced to abandon the use of movable tables and chairs around the Brewer Fountain because of theft and abuse, and that area has been plagued with physical confrontations and assaults. The current landscape design seems to ignore the realities of life on the City of Boston and, in particular, Cambridge Street. We repeated these concerns during the public meeting on February 12, and BHCA would greatly prefer a design change that eliminates or reduces these issues.

The extreme height of the proposed building has been the subject of prior comment and remains a concern for many Beacon Hill residents. Efforts to bring the height in line with the adjacent 165 Cambridge Street and the historic Otis House would be beneficial.

With regard to bicycle storage, assuming public access is maintained, plans for additional security should be made, so that the space is safe for residents and the community.

The proposed 12' wide truck service lane on the east side of the building, on the proposed public access open space (with no area to turn around), would result in a very dangerous condition as trucks enter and back out of the narrow lane, across a busy sidewalk, the bike lane and into a complex area of traffic. Immediately adjacent to the project site, cars cross the roadway to enter and leave Charles River Plaza, bicyclists swerve as the bike lane shifts in front of the site, pedestrians use the sidewalk and crosswalk, bicyclists access the BlueBike station in the median, ambulances rush to Massachusetts General Hospital and fire trucks enter and leave the station across the street. Sight lines from the site's access lane are very poor, due to the Otis House granite retaining wall, and often obstructed. Allowing trucks to back into or out of the site onto the street near this site is extremely dangerous and should be modified.

No estimate of the project's expected truck and delivery trip generation is included in the PNF. The use of Land Use Code 222 (Multi-family High Rise Housing near a transit site) to estimate passenger vehicle trips without any acknowledgement of the trip-generation impacts of senior and affordable housing planned for the site presumably adds to the underestimation of the traffic generated by the project.

The proposed on-street loading zone would exacerbate the already difficult transportation issues affecting Cambridge Street and the surrounding area. Experience elsewhere on Cambridge Street reflects extensive use of curb cuts, loading zones and travel lanes by ride share vehicles, food delivery services, and delivery trucks. The two existing handicapped parking spaces in front of the library offer the only street parking on the north side of Cambridge St between Bowdoin Square and Charles Circle. Replacing these spaces with a loading zone, without a clear plan for enforcement more effective than that employed on the south side of Cambridge St, is an invitation for double parking at the site, increasing the safety risks and congestion on Cambridge St west-bound. Experience elsewhere on Cambridge Street reflects extensive use of curb cuts, loading zones, and travel lanes by ride share vehicles, food delivery services, and delivery trucks. We would welcome an explanation as to how this proposed loading zone will be structured and policed to prevent such misuse that already goes unpoliced.

* * *

We look forward to the next steps in the process, and the opportunity to be involved and provide feedback as the project continues to move forward.

Very truly yours,



Colin J. Zick
President, Beacon Hill Civic Association

Cc (by email): Councilor Sharon Durkan, BHCA Board of Directors, BHCA West End Library Development Committee, Representative Jay Livingstone, West End Civic Association, Historic New England, Margaret Van Scy, Sarah Zaphiris, Boston Civic Design Commission subcommittee



CITY of BOSTON

Michelle Wu, Mayor

To: [Camille Platt]
From: [Nicolas Lau], PWD
Date: [1/30/2025]
Subject: [West End Library PNF] - Boston Public Works Department Comments

Included here are Boston Public Works Department (PWD) comments for West End Library PNF.

Project Coordination:

The developer should coordinate with the City of Boston if proposing any changes in use, dimensional, parking, or loading elements. The developer should coordinate with BTD and PWD to develop safety and accessibility improvements for pedestrians and cyclists in the area.

Project Specific Scope Considerations:

The developer should coordinate with the Parks and Recreation Department and the Office of Green Infrastructure in regards to the planting of proposed street trees and removal of existing street trees. The developer shall coordinate with the City Planning department to develop a Transportation Access Plan Agreement. The developer shall also coordinate with PWD in regards to repairing the sidewalk and pedestrian ramps at the bumpout/midblock crossing and its reciprocal.

Site Plan:

Developer must provide an engineer's site plan at an appropriate engineering scale that shows curb functionality on both sides of all streets that abut the property.

Construction Within The Public vs Private Right-of-Way:

Although the general comments below apply specifically to work associated with the project within the public right-of-way, it is preferred and encouraged for construction in the private right-of-way to be consistent with City standards for public ways, as well, to the extent possible. Should these streets ever become public ways, they must conform to the City standards as outlined below.

All work within the public way shall conform to Boston Public Works Department (PWD) standards. Any non-standard materials proposed within the public way will require approval through the Public Improvement Commission (PIC) process and a fully executed License, Maintenance and Indemnification (LM&I) Agreement with the PIC.

Sidewalks:

The developer is responsible for the reconstruction of the sidewalks abutting the project and, wherever possible, to extend the limits to the nearest intersection to encourage and compliment pedestrian improvements and travel along all sidewalks within the ROW within and beyond the project limits. The reconstruction effort also must meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)/ Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (AAB) guidelines, including the installation of new or reconstruction of existing pedestrian ramps at all corners of all intersections abutting the project site if not already constructed to ADA/AAB compliance per Code of Massachusetts Regulations Title 521, Section 21 (<https://www.mass.gov/regulations/521-CMR-21-curb-cuts>). This includes converting apex ramps to perpendicular ramps at intersection corners and constructing or reconstructing reciprocal pedestrian ramps where applicable. Plans showing the extents of the proposed sidewalk improvements associated with this project must be submitted to the PWD Engineering Division for review and approval. Changes to any curb geometry will need to be reviewed and approved through the PIC.

Please note that at signalized intersections, any alteration to pedestrian ramps may also require upgrading the traffic signal equipment to ensure that the signal post and pedestrian push button locations meet current ADA and Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) requirements. Any changes to the traffic signal system must be coordinated and approved by BTD.

All proposed sidewalk widths and cross-slopes must comply to both City of Boston and ADA/AAB standards.



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Boston City Hall • 1 City Hall Sq Rm 714 • Boston MA 02201-2024
The Office of the Streets, Transportation, and Sanitation
(617) 635-4900



March 14, 2025

Camille Platt, Project Manager
City of Boston Planning Department
Via email: Camille.Platt@boston.gov

Re: West End Library Project Notification Form comments

Dear Camille,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Project Notification Form for the West End Library project. We submit these not in support or opposition of the overall project as proposed, but to highlight areas of value or concern for our client base, and to request additional information on some topics.

Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) clients are some of the City's most vulnerable residents. Our Housing Unit provides free legal services to thousands of low-income tenants in the Boston area each year. We advise tenant organizations representing thousands of residents at sites being redeveloped by the Boston Housing Authority (BHA). GBLS also provides support for the BHA Resident Advisory Board on issues affecting present and future BHA affordable housing.

Our clients, and all low-income Bostonians, face a housing affordability crisis that cannot be overstated. National homelessness is at an all-time peak. In Boston and elsewhere, public housing has served as a critical anchor for low-income communities. Unfortunately, it continues to be a diminishing resource; since 1999, the BHA's public housing portfolio has shrunk by more than 3000 units, reflecting nationwide trends.

GBLS commends Boston's efforts to add new units through the Faircloth-to-RAD (now known as Restore-Rebuild) program. We congratulate POAH in proposing a 100% affordable housing property, and applaud the project's emphasis on creating a substantial number of units for extremely low-income and family-sized households.

The following comments address items in the Appendix E "Affirmative Fair Housing Checklist" (beginning at p. 314 of the posted [PDF](#)) which comprises the "Article 80 - Affirmative Furthering Fair Housing Assessment Tool" and supporting documents including a "Housing and Household Composition Community Profile Report for the Proposed Project Site" and sample Tenant Selection Plan.

1. Affordability and Financial Availability

We urge all stakeholders to reconsider the assumption contained in the Proponent's response in Sec. 3B (Proposed Project Description, at p. 316) and prefigured by the questionnaire language: "based on today's AMI levels and today's published Fair Market Rents (FMR's), all units will be financially available to tenants with Housing Choice Vouchers assuming all units are FMR."

Whether published FMRs and Area Median Income figures reflect real-time conditions experienced by Bostonians is a matter of dispute. GBLS knows units deemed "financially available" by these metrics are often financially infeasible for many households with vouchers. Absent additional supportive resources, we are not confident current levels of feasibility for our lowest-income clients will persist, much less improve, during the timeline of this project.

2. Tenant Screening

GBLS respectfully requests clarification of the Proponent's response on Marketing & Housing Access Intervention Options; see clauses highlighted in bold below:

"The proposed intervention, 'Agreeing to follow progressive practices related to the use of CORI, eviction and credit records in the tenant screening and selection process, and in marketing of units...' will apply to all 119 units in the development. We plan to use progressive practices by **limiting the selection process to only what is necessary in determining and if the tenant is able to pay rent for the term of the lease. This includes but is not limited to:** Income and asset verification, landlord verification, CORI, and screening through BetterNOI. Negative backgrounds are reviewed by the Regional Property Supervisor and applicants have the right to appeal. Mitigating circumstances are considered." (emphasis added; see Sec. 6A "Strategy for Addressing AFFH Goals/Intervention Options & Intervention Enhancements" at p. 323)

The explanation provided is unclear as to what limits, if any, are intended to apply to tenant screenings, and at what stages of the selection process. More information about BetterNOI also may be helpful. We welcome additional detail on any aspect of this response.

Given preexisting levels of eligibility screening already applicable to Project Based Vouchers and MRVP, housing providers are advised to consider practices that can avoid frustrating applicants with multiple hoops and delays. GBLS would draw further attention to regulations promulgated by the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services, as well as BHA's own practices, which apply mitigation efforts prior to rejection to minimize the number of cases where appeals need to be pursued. POAH should engage with the City's Office of Housing Stability and Continuum of Care to identify effective screening practices and notices.

3. Language Access

Sec. 6D (“Discussion of Marketing and Tenant Selection” at p. 326) states: “POAH Communities uses TransPerfect to assist with language barriers.” GBLS would appreciate any further information on the TransPerfect service, including whether it would be used exclusively for advertising, or for ongoing follow up with applicants and residents as well.

4. Unit Sizes and Racial Equity

GBLS encourages the Proponents to consider increasing the number of larger, three-bedroom units to accommodate larger families with children, and especially families of color who are far more likely to need family-sized housing than white households in Boston.

According to data derived from the 2022 Boston Housing Conditions & Real Estate Trends report, more than two-thirds (68%) of white Boston households live in one-bedroom units, and less than one-third (31%) live in two-bedroom or larger family-sized units. In stark contrast, for Latinx Boston families, more than half of households (53%) need two+ bedrooms, and less than half (47%) need just a one-bedroom unit. At least 50% of Black Boston families need two+ bedroom units.

As indicated in the “Housing and Household Composition Community Profile” (see pp. 329-330), the project would add critically important affordable, family-sized housing to the West End Neighborhood. Units will serve under-represented families with children and families of color, as well as low-income households with a disabled person. The West End population is currently much more affluent (incomes over \$100,000) and likelier to live alone or in a two-person household than the rest of Boston. Fewer than 10% of West End households have children, less than half the percentage in Boston at large. 70% of West Enders are white and not Hispanic, a much higher percentage than in other parts of Boston.

The project includes 78 affordable family-sized units, as well as 41 smaller units, opening the door to lower-income households with children and disabled members. This precious housing will serve a diversity of households who otherwise might be effectively excluded from this neighborhood.

We note that less than 7% of units in the West End are three or four bedroom units, compared to over one-third of such units in Boston at large. GBLS urges the Proponents to consider combining some smaller units into additional three-bedroom units to allow even greater opportunity for households who would otherwise be excluded from living in the West End. Although this would result in a lower number of total units, it would increase access to members of protected classes under federal and state fair housing law.

5. Tenant Selection Plan (TSP)

The Mass Housing template Sample TSP provided (at p. 331) would benefit from revisions to facilitate compliance across programs and ensure strong tenant protections. GBLS has assisted in the past on collaborations with BHA, its mixed-finance partners, and resident leaders to modify tenant selection protocols in alignment with the Mass. Housing Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, City AFFH, and BHA Project Based Voucher processes. We recommend a similar process be followed here, though it may be that OHS and BHA are working jointly already to devise such templates.

Thank you again for your consideration of these comments. We are happy to provide more information or engage in further discussions on any of the topics here.

Sincerely,

James McCreight, Access to Justice Volunteer

Mary Lu Mendonca, Staff Attorney

Margaret Turner, Staff Attorney

Beacon Hill Committee for Housing with Public Assets

c/o Beacon Hill Civic Association, 74 Joy Street, Boston, MA 02114

March 3, 2025

Teresa Polhemus
Executive Director/Secretary
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square
Boston, Massachusetts, 02201

Re: 151 Cambridge Street - West End Library Redevelopment Project Notification Form

Dear Director Polhemus:

As long-time advocates for mixed-use development of the West End Branch Library site for library and housing uses, we are pleased to see Preservation of Affordable Housing, Caste Capital, and the city make progress as reflected in the Project Notification Form.

We note two aspects of the PNF that are worth mentioning.

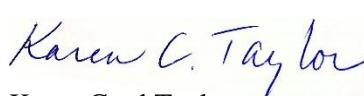
The design of the plaza does not provide security to protect against the rough sleeping and open drug use that has been a constant on Cambridge Street for many years. Many interested neighbors commented on this at the public meeting held February 12, and, indeed, it has been a major topic at every public meeting since this project was first conceived. The library addressed the issue incrementally over the years by adding fencing along the sidewalk until the entire site is now fenced in, except for a gate at the library entrance that is unlocked during hours when the library is open. Before the fencing, the most problematic times were in the evening after the library closed, overnight, and on Sundays, year-round.

We are pleased that POAH and its design team agreed to give further thought to securing the plaza and will return with a new concept within 90 days.

This project is no exception to the general rule that real estate projects in Boston are chronically slow to proceed and behind schedule. POAH should update the timeline set out in its 2023 proposal, and publish it for the benefit of the BPDA and the public.

We wish to do all within our capacity to see the project as described in the PNF reach completion swiftly. Do not hesitate to call on us if we can be of assistance.

Very truly yours,

  
Karen Cord Taylor Suzanne Besser John Achatz



Camille Platt <camille.platt@boston.gov>

librasry meeting Wed

1 message

Susan Cox <[REDACTED]>

Tue, Feb 11, 2025 at 4:01 PM

To: "camille.platt@boston.gov" <camille.platt@boston.gov>

Just now I registered for tomorrow night's public meeting which I am sorry to say I cannot attend. Mostly I wanted to say how thrilled I am at the proposed plan to build a new library that may/will decrease homelessness! I so clearly remember yesteryears when libraries thought their job was to flush homeless people out of the library. Understandable, but we much prefer the newer library model of compassion, treating everyone with respect. Thank you, librarians! Lead the way.

Respectfully,

Susan Cox

(At 91, I don't venture out at night on these icy evenings, but I want to most emphatically support this project. if there's anything we need more of, in these trying times, it is kindness and respect.)



Camille Platt <camille.platt@boston.gov>

Re: West End Library Public Meeting Confirmation

1 message

Stacey Parker <[REDACTED]>
To: Camille Platt <Camille.Platt@boston.gov>

Sun, Feb 16, 2025 at 4:20 PM

Hi, Camille. I was on the below reference call but only because a friend forwarded it to me. Not only do I live at Charles River Park, but I am also President of The Friends of the West End Library.

I would like to request invitations to any upcoming community meetings going forward. Also, the librarian for the branch was not even aware of any meeting. Her name is Lauren Laplante.

I do have a real concern regarding the proposed plan for trash removal and deliveries to the residences and the library.

1. You know people are going to park in the Loading Zone and run into the library
2. We have worked so hard to create a welcoming feeling for the library that having trash containers on the sidewalk will certainly be a detractor. We tried to have a fabric donation receptacle on the sidewalk and the homeless made a mess of that. I know the maintenance staff will put out and take in the bins but they can't stay out to watch them until they are emptied.
3. Don't you think that the presence of the bike lane will be another obstacle to the loading zone plan? Moving trucks and garbage trucks are oversized.

These are a few of my concerns after living in this area for 40 years. Thank you for your consideration.

Stacey Parker
8 Whittier Place
Boston

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 12, 2025, at 2:40 PM, Camille Platt <no-reply@zoomgov.com> wrote:



Hello Stacey Parker,

Thank you for registering for West End Library Public Meeting. You can find information about this meeting below.

West End Library Public Meeting

Date & Time Feb 12, 2025 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Meeting ID 160 516 3477

[Add to Calendar\(.ics\)](#) | [Add to Google Calendar](#) | [Add to Yahoo Calendar](#)To edit or cancel your registration details, [click here](#).Please submit any questions to: Camille.Platt@boston.gov.

WAYS TO JOIN ZOOM

Join from PC, Mac, iPad, or Android

Join Meeting

If the button above does not work, paste this into your browser:

[https://www.zoomgov.com/w/1605163477?tk=PGaiPkDwy776tpU7ZeBsepfcuOo73aSI0cjLgVL1DCg.DQcAAAAAX6zZ1RZPSUxnUVpBa1RNUzEwSnhxMzRRdFBnAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA](https://www.zoomgov.com/w/1605163477?tk=PGaiPkDwy776tpU7ZeBsepfcuOo73aSI0cjLgVL1DCg.DQcAAAAAX6zZ1RZPSUxnUVpBa1RNUzEwSnhxMzRRdFBnAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA)

To keep this meeting secure, do not share this link publicly.

Join via audio

One tap mobile: US: [+16692545252,,1605163477#](tel:+16692545252,,1605163477#) or [+16469641167,,1605163477#](tel:+16469641167,,1605163477#)

Or dial For higher quality, dial a number based on your current location.
US: +1 669 254 5252 or +1 646 964 1167 or +1 646 828 7666 or +1 669 216 1590 or +1 415 449 4000 or +1 551 285 1373 or 833 568 8864 (Toll Free)

Meeting ID: 160 516 3477

International numbers

Join by SIP

1605163477@sip.zoomgov.com

Or, join by H.323

H.323: 161.199.138.10 (US West)
161.199.136.10 (US East)

Meeting ID: 160 516 3477

Thank you!



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Camille Platt <camille.platt@boston.gov>

Height of building

5 messages

harold.brink@gmail.com <[REDACTED]>
To: camille.platt@boston.gov

Wed, Feb 12, 2025 at 7:30 PM

Hi Camille,

I am still concerned about height of building. It being 30 ft over the limit seems problematic. The distance to the building on the west, and there only being a 20 ft clearance seems like it would create a very dark plaza underneath. Also on the otherside of the building, I think it will be fairly dark.

Can you let me know about the variance process for this development?

Thanks

Harold

Camille Platt <camille.platt@boston.gov>
To: [REDACTED]

Tue, Feb 18, 2025 at 9:46 AM

Hi Harold,

Thank you for your message and for attending the public meeting last week.

The process for a variance for this size of project is going through the Article 80B process, of which they are currently, where the project is reviewed from an architectural, open space, streetscape, and environmental lens by the Boston Planning Department. Once the review staff and others feel the project is ready, the project then goes in front of the BPDA Board for a vote. Then, the project will tentatively go in front of the Zoning Board of Appeals to ask for the variances and to receive a vote from that commission as well.

Thank you and let me know if you have any other questions!

Best,

Camille

[Quoted text hidden]



Camille Platt (*pronouns she/her/hers*)
Project Manager
Planning Department
City of Boston
[617-918-4362](tel:617-918-4362) (w)

harold.brink@gmail.com <[REDACTED]>

Tue, Feb 18, 2025 at 1:07 PM

To: Camille Platt <camille.platt@boston.gov>

Hi Camille:

What is the reason for applying for a zoning variance? What is the rationale for needing to build above zoning code? How do I voice my concern about a variance? Especially one I don't understand the reason for?

Thanks

Harold

[Quoted text hidden]

Camille Platt <camille.platt@boston.gov>

To: [REDACTED]

Mon, Feb 24, 2025 at 7:27 PM

Hi Harold,

The Proponent is proposing an all-affordable development and won an RFP put out by the Mayor's Office of Housing, in part based on the high amount of affordable units they are proposing currently. I'm attaching the RFP here as well for reference.

You can submit comments to me directly regarding your concern about a variance being asked for, or through the project webpage here: <https://www.bostonplans.org/projects/development-projects/west-end-library>

Thank you and let me know if there are other questions I may be able to assist with.

Best,

Camille

[Quoted text hidden]

 **Final draft of West End Library + Housing RFP.pdf**
3334K

harold.brink@gmail.com [REDACTED]

To: Camille Platt <camille.platt@boston.gov>

Mon, Feb 24, 2025 at 9:59 PM

Hi Camilla,

The fact that the RFP was put out for a building that is higher than zoning allows for is not really establishing a "need" for a variance. The building's height is very imposing and as a resident living across the street we feel increasingly blocked in by very tall buildings on all sides. It is really really unclear to me what the need is to go above the established building height limit for that lot. Why not stay within existing zoning codes? The "need" for a variance has really not been established by the city in my mind.

Could you please register this complaint for me? I have heard a similar concerns from other neighbors so it would be great to log this issue formally

I also want to be made aware of all further meetings related to this issue.

Thanks

Harold

[Quoted text hidden]



Comment: Created Date	First Name	Last Name	Organization	Opinion	Comments
1/8/2025	Brian	Wheeler		Neutral	Please find a new architectural gimmick. Every building has colossal order windows (2-3 story clumps of windows) and they're offset/disordered. Have an original idea, please.
1/9/2025	Nikolas	Varga		Support	Strongly support this project. The trend of BPL adding affordable housing over its libraries is an amazing one that other cities should take note of. The zero parking, large amount of affordable housing, and efforts to beautify the streetscape make this an excellent project that should be approved immediately.
					Great project. Love dense housing in the center of the city, with no parking. Love a new library.
1/9/2025	Jameson	Brown		Support	The project is missing an elevator for the library. The library is 2 floors, but the 3 project elevators barely provide access to the 1st floor of the library, and don't seem to at all for the 2nd. The library needs an elevator, and it would be great if there were also a grand stair.
					When will the West End Branch Library close for construction?
					When will construction begin on this project?
					When is the proposed end date of construction?
1/9/2025	Fred	Grosso		Support	When will new BPL West End Branch be open for circulation of books? Congratulations!
1/9/2025	Sebastian	Belfanti	The West End Museum	Support	This is a wonderful project that has gone through extensive community review already. I hope that process is respected and that this project can move forward quickly within the BPD.
					This is a great proposal that retains and enhances a critical public service (the library) while providing much-needed housing in a great transit-oriented location in the city center. I wish the building could be taller, but the lack of on-site parking and mass timber construction are both positive developments. I urge the BPDA and other entities to approve this project without delay.
1/9/2025	James	Thornton		Support	On a separate note, while I understand that the proponents are POAH and Caste, this is city-owned land that will retain a city-managed library. If the city is serious about addressing housing issues, one solution would be to eliminate or significantly attenuate zoning requirements for development on city-owned plots. Either the city (partnering with the proponents) wants this to be built, or it believes this project is in violation of its own zoning rules and should stop it in its tracks. Public comment and full zoning review seems to undercut the goal that the city claims it wants to meet. Please take actual steps to continue promoting housing development in all parts of Boston, but specifically those areas in the core of the city near public transit.
1/9/2025	Alex	Weinberg		Oppose	Why does every Boston architect have to alternate the windows from floor to floor? Do you all have the same prion disease?
1/10/2025	Benjamin	Allen		Support	I am strongly in favor of this project. This is an underutilized plot of land, and adding housing to an area that sorely needs thousands of units is critical! I would encourage rapid approval of this project.
1/10/2025	Karen	Taylor	resident of Beacon Hill	Support	Thank goodness this project is getting going. I was wondering what had happened to it! The building's height will better reflect the street environment, especially now that MGH's building has topped off and we can see how that side of Cambridge Street is renewing itself. I'm eager for the new library and the new look of the street.
1/10/2025	Paul	Fanning		Support	100% behind this. Please approve it!
1/11/2025	Fraser	Reichner		Support	As with every project adding housing to Boston (and notably one of the densest transit accessible parts of downtown), I wholeheartedly support this project. In fact, I think it should be taller and include more units. My only complaint is the current design is uninspired and unattractive. I would hope this could be improved, but even without that, we should just build it.
1/15/2025	Conor	MacNeill		Support	More homes pls
					Way too small. During the design development for this project by the various developers, there were many heights considered. All options were roughly aligned with buildings that already exist in this neighborhood and none could be considered to be setting a new height precedent. It appears that a short option was selected, meaning this brand new building consisting of all affordable units will largely be dwarfed by the other buildings nearby. How terrible to build shorter than possible and lose so many potential affordable units.
1/17/2025	Stephen	Meuse		Oppose	
1/22/2025	Russell	Johnson		Neutral	How do apply for the units if not built yet? How's that process work? Usually see this in Boston then you apply and all units are filled.
1/23/2025	CAROLINE	ROMANO		Support	I think an expanded library with affordable housing above it is a wonderful idea and desperately needed.
					The West End is one of the best, most highly in-demand, and incredibly transit dense neighborhoods in Greater Boston. The fact that this proposal keeps the West End branch of the library as a public service and adds housing is amazing. My only complaint is that is is not bigger. I live in an 11 floor building, surrounded by newly build residential buildings which are even taller. If economically and architecturally possible, additional floors should be added, with market rate housing if needed! I would also add that this project, as proposed, is such a positive step in fighting our housing crisis, that I hope it is not bogged down with endless community input and hearings, maze of permitting requirements, and stall-tactic lawsuits so that construction can begin as soon as possible. Thank you.
1/23/2025	Joseph	Rinaldi		Support	
1/24/2025	Zachary	Finding		Support	Boston needs more housing, affordable housing even better. While a more traditional design that blends in with Beacon Hill's aesthetic would be preferable, I am more than happy to support any new development around where I live that provides more housing.

1/24/2025	ted	liszewski		Support	<p>As a youth I read many books at this Library. Glad to hear it is proposed to use as housing. Only comment, keep the monthly rent low so a retired person can afford it. Present cost for other housing is out of my range. People usually use medium income as a guide which is too high for me. Thanks</p>
1/24/2025	Rose	Hendrick		Support	<p>I strongly support this, as a person who is fortunate to live in a designated affordable apartment that I gained through a lottery, I couldn't be happier with the program. It is the only way I can live alone in this very expensive city. The fact that it is attached to a library is an excellent idea. What a wonderful way to incorporate residents into the community.</p>
1/25/2025	Paul	Fanning		Support	<p>Great project, please approve it without changes to make it smaller (if anything, make it bigger.)</p>
1/26/2025	KB	Beck		Support	<p>This looks like a wonderful and much-needed project. The West End Branch (my local branch) of the BPL is pretty shabby, and I feel sorry for the wonderful staff who must spend most of their time attending to the needs of unhouse people who hang out there because they have nowhere else to go. It would be great to see a vibrant, engaging library space there. I endorse adding a separate office on the property (run by mental health professionals, not library staff) who can offer counseling and social services to people who are unhouse or experiencing addiction or mental health challenges. Ideally, some of the local unhouse population can have ?first dibs? at the affordable-housing units being built. As for the housing component, it?is a great and much-needed addition to the area. I appreciate that this project favors bikes and pedestrians over cars. And am thrilled that this is not going to be a ?luxury condo? conversion like the many overtaking Beacon Hill.</p>
1/28/2025	Lucy	Climer-Kennedy	Northeastern	Support	<p>I support this project. Keeping strong rent controls and having units accessible to those making 30% AMI would be super awesome. As many (good) units as possible please!</p>
2/10/2025	Mary	Lapointe	Spatial Consulting	Support	<p>Support project. Will housing be neurodiverse?</p>
2/10/2025	Allison	Geary		Support	<p>As a Beacon Hill resident and frequent user of the West End library, I am strongly in support of this project. This neighborhood is both one of the best connected to high quality public transit and one of the most expensive neighborhoods in the city of Boston. I feel strongly that sharing in our access to these kinds of amenities is important and that allowing our community to grow strengthens it.</p>
2/12/2025	Joe	Connolly		Support	<p>Hi, I have lived in the West End for about 2.5 years now. I am a YIMBY. We need to make it easier for developers to build market rate housing. I wish this project was much bigger. But in spirit of minimizing friction to builders, I hope this project is approved as is soon.</p>
2/12/2025	molly	below		Support	<p>We need more accessible housing now</p>
					<p>Absolutely build this project.</p> <p>We need more housing. This is absolutely a game-changer, and will be a great project to show other Boston neighborhoods and areas of the Greater Boston Area what can be done with government-owned/public buildings.</p> <p>Please do not cave to any demands to lower the height of this building (I assume you'll get these, every project seems to). This project is perfectly placed in an area of Beacon Hill/West End where there are larger buildings and will not feel out of place at all! The new MGH building (55 Fruit) of what, 270ft?, just down the block, its current office neighbors on Cambridge St, and the new Bullfinch triangle buildings off in the near-distance behind this site (when looking from Cambridge St) remind us that it's okay to have tall, dense, buildings in this area. This will not be out-of-place at all.</p> <p>Please do not let the opposition scare you with traffic, trash, or whatever else. There is so much density across the street that would never get built today if those concerns were always taken into consideration (of course, do what seems reasonable).</p> <p>Bravo for taking a swing with this project, and not a putt. A 165 ft tall (190 to roof?) residential building, in a great location in Boston, with 119 units, with the estimation for about 300 occupants should be applauded from the rooftops (of Beacon Hill)–without even needing to mention the affordable-housing of this project!</p>
2/13/2025	Emanuel	Malandrakis		Support	<p>Again, I wish to provide upmost support for this project to go forward. I currently own a condo in the West End (since 2020) and lived in Beacon Hill before that since 2013. I would love to have this new library and these new occupants as neighbors.</p>
2/13/2025	Jack	Michele		Oppose	<p>I do not support this. This area has problems with homeless already. A man there tried to assault my mom.</p>
					<p>The development concerning the West End Library should not go ahead until all the people in the West End are given ample time to be able to participate in the planning. The West End was destroyed before and this will be the complete annihilation of the West End. There is nothing wrong with the library except a little TLC. Maybe one can renovate the ugly parking area between the library the museum and turn it into a lovely garden.</p> <p>Thank you,</p>
2/21/2025	Georg	Bernhardt-Miller		Oppose	<p>Georg Bernhardt-Miller</p>
2/23/2025	Gwen	Tawresey		Neutral	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I am concerned about the lack of parking for this project. This project is adding hundreds of people to the neighborhood, with no place for those people to park. The neighborhood is already nearly impossible to park in for those of us already here. What is the plan for ensuring that current residents are not negatively impacted by potentially hundreds of new people looking for street parking?</p>

					I am very concerned about the height of this building. Beacon Hill is increasingly surrounded by very tall buildings. The new MGH building is much taller than the renderings suggested. I am very concerned this building will also be much taller than suggested in the renderings. I am very supportive of a new development here, but can you investigate the options for a building that is not as tall?
2/24/2025	miriam	Bredella		Oppose	I also heard that this building is taller than the building limit. Please also propose something that stays within the existing regulations
3/1/2025	Damien	Croteau-Chonka		Support	As a long-time patron of the Boston Public Library, I am deeply supportive of the proposed project to transform the West End Library at 151 Cambridge Street. This transit-oriented, deeply affordable housing project will be a model for future infill work at other library branches. It is an attractive building that will not only house many books to read but also many people to read them.
					In the Beacon Hill Times, February 21, 2025 edition the cover story ?City holds virtual meeting on West End Branch Library redevelopment plans? reported the possibility of the West End Branch Library being replaced with ?unstaffed book lockers.? The article felt like an early April fool?s joke. However, the article posits that the possibility is in fact real. Recently, a library patron described the library as ?a wonderful place where opportunities, ideas, and people come together.? How can an unstaffed book locker possibly serve that greater purpose? Patrons rely on the West End Branch Library for more than just books: the library offers resources for families, tutoring, classes, and a space for the entire community. It is a place where someone can check out a laptop who otherwise might not have access to technology. A place where a child who is not yet of school age, can experience a book read aloud among peers. Furthermore, why has there been no input from patrons of the West End Library regarding turning the library into a locker? Patrons only learned about the virtual meeting after it had already taken place. It appears the decision was made without taking into account what a significant loss to the West End being without the library for a long-term duration of 2 years would have on the community. For a project touting itself as being ?inclusive? it feels extremely exclusive. Exclusive of opportunities. Exclusive of ideas. Exclusive of the community of the West End. The West End is known for its inclusion. Let?s keep it that way.
3/18/2025	M	W		Oppose	This form submission is to memorialize that Greater Boston Legal Services submitted a letter with comments on the West End Library Project Notification Form via email attachment to Project Manager Camille Platt on March 14, 2025. Please contact me if there are any concerns about the form of our submission. Thank you.
3/18/2025	Mary Lu	Mendonca	Greater Boston Legal Services	Neutral	Need to find a way to house the West End library in another location during construction. It is a crime to replace the library with an unstaffed book locker.
3/18/2025	Harold	Caan		Oppose	